

PAX RIVER, MD - Congressman Steny Hoyer spoke today at the Patuxent River Naval Air Station to dedicate the new \$24 million complex that will become the home of nine of the fourteen test aircraft that will define jet fighter technology for generations to come.

"I am proud to join you today as we dedicate this new facility," Hoyer said. "It is ready in advance of the arrival of the first Joint Strike Fighter to Pax. JSF government and contractor team members—you have an important task ahead of you and I am so pleased to be with you on the ground floor as we launch this exciting new aircraft."

In March of 2004, Hoyer joined Pax officials to break ground on the JSF facility. "We launched construction of one important element of the largest defense acquisition program in the history of the Department of Defense," said Congressman Hoyer. "The JSF is the future of our tactical air power and it is going to provide jobs in St. Mary's County for years to come. Today's dedication is yet another step in this important process."

During his remarks, Hoyer announced that Lockheed Martin was selected to build their version of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. "After much anticipation, we were all pleased to learn which team would be tasked with building the Joint Strike Fighter," Hoyer said. "Lockheed was chosen to build the aircraft that will replace many that are flying today, not only for the U.S., but for several other nations around the world."

The original funding secured by Hoyer enabled the JSF program to function much more efficiently. It consolidated the engineering staff into a facility that will be co-located with the aircraft hangar. Eight older, smaller and less efficient buildings were demolished and replaced with the office and work spaces for the hundreds of engineers and scientists working on the program. "I was very pleased to work with Navy Secretary Gordon England to ensure that this crucial facility's funding was included in the Navy's budget proposal, and was thrilled that Congress approved these funds for fiscal year 2004 allowing us to keep this facility on track," added Hoyer.

As a senior member of the House Appropriations Committee, Congressman Hoyer has been the lead advocate on fighting to secure funding for this project and protecting the interests of Pax River. He expressed his satisfaction with the speed and proficiency at which the program is progressing.

“I am proud to have played a role in making sure we had the \$24 million for this project because I believe that you have to give people the right tools and environment in which to excel. The work you will be doing here will enable our country to maintain air superiority for decades into the future,” Hoyer said.

The Joint Strike Fighter Test and Support Facility project is expected bring a total of 9 aircraft to the base, and first aircraft is expected to be completed in 2007.

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